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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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DRAFTED BY E:CRFRANK:NAF
APPROVED BY E:WDROGERS
AF - AMB. SCHAUFELE
S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN
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O 081828Z DEC 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 298501 TOSEC 320075

NODIS
FOR SECRETARY FM ROGERS, GENEVA-WISNER, LONDON-AMB

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, EGEN, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: LUNCH WITH BRAND FOURIE AND AMBASSADOR BOTHA OF SOUTH AFRICA

REF: MASERU 1472
LONDON FOR THE AMBASSADOR
1. SCHAUFELE, CHARLES FRANK AND I HAD LUNCH YESTERDAY WITH BRAND FOURIE AND AMBASSADOR BOTHA. THE MAIN SUBJECT, NATURALLY ENOUGH, WAS GENEVA.

2. FOURIE AND BOTHA ELABORATED THEIR IDEAS ON HOW TO BREAK
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A POSSIBLE DEADLOCK IN GENEVA. AT THE OUTSET THEY INFORMED US THAT THEY DID NOT SUPPORT SMITH'S "INTERNAL OPTION" IF IT EXCLUDED ALL OF THE GENEVA PARTICIPANTS. THE SOUTH

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AFRICANS COULD SUPPORT, HOWEVER, AND URGED US TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY A VARIANT OF THE INTERNAL OPTION. THEIR SCENARIO: SMITH WOULD ORGANIZE A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT HIMSELF, ON THE LINES OF ANNEX C AND INVOLVING MUZOREWA AND, IF POSSIBLE, NKOMO. THEY FELT THAT MUZOREWA WOULD "GRAB THE CHANCE" TO TRANSLATE HIS LEADERSHIP OF A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT INTO POWER IN AN INDEPENDENT MAJORITY RULE GOVERNMENT. NKOMO MIGHT ALSO GO ALONG; FOR ALTHOUGH HE WOULD AT THE OUTSET BE PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE

TO THE MORE POPULAR MUZOREWA, NKOMO COULD HOPE TO REPLACE MUZOREWA EVENTUALLY BECAUSE OF THE BISHOP'S WEAK PERSONALITY AND LACK OF ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS. MUGABE AND SITHOLE WOULD PROBABLY REMAIN OUT OF RHODESIA AND WOULD LOSE POWER EVENTUALLY. MACHEL AND NYERERE WOULD OPPOSE ALL THIS BUT THE PROSPECT OF CONTINUED GUERRILLA WARFARE AGAINST A BLACK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INHIBITING AND THE WAR WOULD EVENTUALLY WIND DOWN. "AFRICANS WILL ACCEPT A FAIT ACCOMPLI," THEY SAID, CITING AS EVIDENCE THE RAPID RECOGNITION OF ANGOLA BY AFRICAN STATES.

3. THEY FELT THAT A BREAKUP IN GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS AN ESSENTIAL PRECONDITION TO THIS SCENARIO. AN ADJOURNMENT, WITH THE PRESUMPTION THAT ALL THE PARTIES WOULD EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE CONFERENCE, WOULD NOT BE PROPITIOUS FOR AN "INTERNAL OPTION" SOLUTION.

4. THEY SAID THAT SMITH WAS PLANNING TO INTRODUCE A DOCUMENT AT GENEVA INCLUDING SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF ANNEX C, BUT NOT IDENTIFYING THEM AS SUCH. THIS WOULD SIGNAL SMITH'S WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE. THEY EMPHASIZED THEIR UNDERSTANDING THAT WE WOULD NOT PUSH SMITH BEYOND ANNEX C. WE AFFIRMED THAT OUR POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED. WE ALSO AGREED WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR SOMEONE OTHER THAN SMITH TO INTRODUCE THE ANNEX C PROPOSALS, SINCE HIS AUTHORSHIP IS NOT A VERY HIGH RECOMMENDATION IN THE EYES OF THE OTHER GENEVA DELEGATES. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CANDIDATE WAS

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MUZOREWA. THEY HAD NO ILLUSIONS, THOUGH, THAT A TWO-TIERED PROPOSAL FROM ANYONE WOULD FLY AT THIS LATE DATE. BOTHA IS THE GLOOMIER OF THE TWO, BUT BOTH, I THINK, ANTICIPATE A BREAKDOWN.

5. COMMENT: IF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BREAKS DOWN, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE WILL BE FACED WITH A VERY DIFFICULT CHOICE. THE RHODESIANS, WITH STRONG SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT, WILL PROBABLY SEEK OUR SUPPORT FOR A MODIFIED "INTERNAL OPTION" REVOLVING AROUND MUZOREWA. THIS STRATEGY

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MIGHT WELL BE ACCEPTED BY MUZOREWA,
PARTICULARLY IF IT HAD U.S. AND U.K. BACKING. (SEE
SCHAUFELE CONVERSATION WITH GABALLAH, SECOND MAN IN THE
ANC, IN REFTEL.) NEVERTHELESS, WE WERE NOT AS PERSUADED
AS BOTHA AND FOURIE THAT THIS WOULD BE THE BEST
COURSE OF ACTION IF THE CONFERENCE DID BREAK DOWN. END
COMMENT.

6. THE SOUTH AFRICANS SAW ANOTHER POSSIBLE WAY OUT OF THE
GENEVA STALEMATE, I.E., AN OFFER BY THE BRITISH TO PLAY
AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE

IT IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT SMITH HAS SAID PUBLICALLY HE
WOULD NOT AGREE. THE SOUTH AFRICANS SUSPECT, HOWEVER,
THAT THIS MAY BE A NEGOTIATING POSITION, AND THAT SMITH
WOULD BE PREPARED TO MOVE IF THE NEED ARISES. SOUTH
AFRICA ITSELF HAS NO OFFICIAL POSITION ON THIS VARIANT
COURSE, BUT FOURIE SAID PERSONALLY, "IT IS THE ONLY
BLOOMING WAY OUT IF THE CONFERENCE IS TO SUCCEED."

7. FOURIE ALSO TOLD US THAT HE HAD INFORMED HAWKINS,
SMITH'S MAN IN PRETORIA, THAT SAG HAS PROMISED NOT TO
PUSH RHODESIANS BEYOND ANNEX C, BUT FOURIE PERSONALLY
TOLD HAWKINS SOUTH AFRICA WOULD NOT OBJECT IF RHODESIANS
THEMSELVES DECIDE TO CONCEDE MORE.

8. FOURIE ALSO SAID THATTHE WHITE RHODESIANS WOULD LIKE
TO SEE SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT FUND IS
STILL ALIVE. THE SOUTH AFRICANS AGREED WITH US, HOWEVER,
THAT IT WAS NOT TIMELY TO APPROACH OTHER DONORS ON THE
FUND UNTIL GENEVA BEGAN TO SORT ITSELF OUT. (COMMENT:
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THIS IS THE LINE I THINK YOU SHOULD TAKE WITH THE BRITISH
IN LONDON THIS WEEKEND.)
ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, BRIEFING MATERIALS, MEETING REPORTS, NEGOTIATIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE298501
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CRFRANK:NAF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840099-0403
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761261/aaaacapf.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: LUNCH WITH BRAND FOURIE AND AMBASSADOR BOTHA OF SOUTH AFRICA
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, EGEN, UK, RH, SF, (FOURIE, BRAND)
To: SECRETARY GENEVA LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006